

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 11678 250916Z
ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2155
INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 11678

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CGEN, OTRA, UR, US
SUBJECT: EXIT/ENTRY POINTS FOR OFFICIAL PERSONNEL

REFS: (A) MOSCOW 563, (B) MOSCOW 3861, AND
PREVIOUS, (C) 77 MOSCOW 9487

1. AS DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, THE EMBASSY HAS FOR SEVERAL YEARS BEEN TRYING TO CONVINCE THE SOVIET MFA TO AGREE TO EXPAND FROM THREE TO TEN THE NUMBER OF EXIT/ENTRY POINTS FOR AMERICAN AND SOVIET PERSONNEL ASSIGNED TO EACH OTHER'S COUNTRY. THAT HAS ALSO BEEN AN IMPORTANT US OBJECTIVE AT THE US-USSR CONSULAR TALKS OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS (PER REFTEL B AND PREVIOUS).

2. THE STANDARD MFA RESPONSE HAS BEEN A COUNTER-PROPOSAL THAT EACH SIDE ISSUE VISAS VALID FOR ALL EXIT/ENTRY POINTS IN OPEN AREAS. HERETOFORE, THIS WOULD HAVE RESULTED IN AN IMBALANCE HEAVILY WEIGHTED IN FAVOR OF THE SOVIET SIDE.

3. THE EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT WE CAN NOW MAKE AN ANODYNE CONCESSION TO THE MFA WHICH WOULD BE MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE
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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 11678 250916Z

FOLLOWING A US RESPONSE TO THE NEW SOVIET "LIBERALIZED" CLOSED AREA NOTE OF JANUARY 4, 1978, AS REPORTED REFTEL (A). UNDER OUR PROPOSAL, THE US NOTE RESPONDING TO THE SOVIET NOTE WOULD INCLUDE SOME COSMETIC CHANGES AND CLOSE AZW AREAS CONTAINING ENTRY POINTS WE DON'T WANT SOVIETS TO USE. WE COULD ACCOMPLISH THIS, FOR EXAMPLE, BY CLOSING 25 KM ZONE AROUND ALL BORDERS, AS SOVIETS DO, AND MERELY

LEAVE THOSE POINTS OPEN THROUGH WHICH TRANSIT WOULD BE PERMITTED.

4. ONCE WE HAVE DELIVERED SUCH A NOTE TO THE MFA, EMBASSY WOULD BE IN A POSITION TO ANNOUNCE TO THE MFA THAT WE ACCEPT ITS PROPOSAL TO ISSUE VISAS VALID FOR EXIT/ENTRY AT ALL POINTS IN OPEN AREAS.

5. UNDER SITUATION WHICH HAS BEEN PREVAILING FOR LAST SEVERAL YEARS, EMBASSY MUST REQUEST "EXCEPTION" FOR TRAVEL VIA EXIT/ENTRY POINTS, SUCH AS BREST, NOT AMONG THE THREE AUTHORIZED ONES (I.E., MOSCOW, LENINGRAD, VYBORG). IN RECENT YEARS, MFA WOULD OCCASIONALLY DENY "EXCEPTION" FOR OUTGOING TRAVEL AND INVARIABLY REFUSE TO AUTHORIZE ISSUANCE IN MOSCOW FOR RETURN TRAVEL (THUS REQUIRING TRAVELER TO APPLY ABROAD FOR RETURN VISA). SINCE EMBASSY'S IMPOSITION OF 21-DAY RULE FOR ISSUANCE IN MOSCOW OF US TRANSIT VISAS (PER PARA 6, REFTEL C), MFA HAS IMPOSED 21-DAY RULE FOR EMBASSY EXIT/ENTRY "EXCEPTION" REQUESTS. THIS REQUIREMENT HAS A MINOR NEGATIVE IMPACT ON OUR OFFICIAL TRAVELERS BUT ALSO HAS A POSITIVE EFFECT IN THAT SOVIETS NOW ALWAYS GRANT OUR REQUESTS FOR "EXCEPTIONS" IN BOTH DIRECTIONS, BECAUSE OF OUR RETALIATION LEVERAGE ON TRANSIT VISAS.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: DEPARTMENT'S CONCURRENCE OR COM-
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PAGE 03 MOSCOW 11678 250916Z

MENTS ON PROPOSAL IN PARAS 3 AND 4 REQUESTED. MATLOCK

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